Maximizing Literacy through Multi Media

By Chris Davis and Julie Hunt

This year our Elementary School is embarking on several new initiatives designed to inspire, advance and celebrate learning. One of these programs is ‘Literacy Enrichment through Multi-Media’ and we are off to a great start!

Throughout the year, on a rotating basis, 2-3 classes at a time will be engaged in learning experiences linked to curriculum, using technology as tool. For example, Mr. Teinert’s students were videotaped reflecting about their ‘seed moments’ which lead to writing personal narratives. Students’ Me Posters were photographed uploaded into Prezi projects and then ‘voiced-over’ using Camtasia – as a means of inspiring more seed moment stories.

Another project underway is shared publishing projects using Google Docs involving two other classes in which a student volunteers work to be projected on screen while the whole class edits work for spelling, grammar, and word choice. In the next phase, students simultaneously edit other students’ work using Google Docs. By collaborating in real time online every student gets to interact purposefully, learning from the examples and errors of other students.

Classes will also be involved in shorter projects involving music and literacy - such as activities that link poetry to song in order to study irregular verbs and syllable patterns. For instance, several third grade classrooms studied syllable patterns through the poem “One Inch Tall” by Shel Silverstein. With online games they practiced different ways of separating multisyllabic words and ended the study by videotaping a mimed and sung version of the poem. Meanwhile, a few fourth grade classes worked with irregular past tense verbs using Shel Silverstein’s “True Story.” These types of activities bridge rhythm, melody, language, and movement and in so doing, engage a wider range of students’ brains, creativity, metacognition and intelligence; leading to learning that ‘sticks’. So far the results have been explosive.

The multi-purpose room is being re-modernized as a home for our pilot project; to be used as a video conferencing center, recording studio, theater for student drama productions, and mini-cinema. Five netbooks are being piloted and compared to classroom desktops to inform future purchases. A flat screen has been installed at entrance to elementary hallway to showcase video productions and highlight elementary classroom learning and community goings-on. As you can see, we are in motion toward maximizing our potential as a virtual and digital learning community. Pass by the elementary entrance to view our video productions. Peek in the Multipurpose Room to see what is happening. Watch for student publications. Join us in motivating and celebrating your child’s learning!